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Suit claims hatchery is harmful to trout

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YAKIMA -- Environmentalists who say a government hatchery on Icicle Creek near Leavenworth harms disappearing populations of wild steelhead and bull trout sued yesterday to try to fix the problems.

Washington Trout sued the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Yakima federal court. The group says the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery, a chinook hatchery built in 1939, blocks the migration of wild fish and traps them in a one-mile stretch from which water is diverted. Bull trout and steelhead are protected under the Endangered Species Act, so the government is obligated to help them, the group said.

Fish and Wildlife and environmental groups have worked together in recent years to fix the situation, but Washington Trout said the venture has been unsuccessful.

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